English Language Proficiency and Code-Switching in the Saudi EFL University Classrooms: Learners' Perspectives

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify the perceptions and practices of students with various proficiency levels toward reasons, factors, functions of using CS by learners and, teachers' using CS in EFL classes, and its impact on the teaching and learning processes. To this end, sixty-four English majors were chosen out of 70 Saudi university students. The participants were classified into three groups (i.e. three levels of high, mid, and low-proficiency) according to the scores obtained in the Oxford Placement Test. A qualitative and quantitative design was used throughout the integration of questionnaires, in-class observations, and interviews to reach valid and reliable data. The results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis indicate that most mid- and low-proficient students have favorable attitudes towards the use of CS in the EFL classroom, whereas the high proficient students have negative perceptions towards the use of CS. The findings also indicate that the participants with lower proficiency tend to use CS more than the intermediate or advanced ones. In addition to this, there are some discrepancies in attitudes towards the usages of CS among the three participant groups. These discrepancies display that the mid and low -proficient students see the use of CS as an influential teaching and learning tool to facilitate students' comprehension and knowledge of target language grammar and vocabulary. On the other hand, the high proficient participants see that CS can be off-putting as it does not help in improving their linguistic competence in English. In addition, the findings showed that there is a negative relationship between learners' proficiency level and their attitude toward using CS. The findings have some implications for teachers, material developers and English policy makers.

Keywords: attitudes, code-switching, factors, functions, proficiency

INTRODUCTION

Due to the importance and the widespread of English as an international Language around the world, there is a big trend among the people who want to learn English as a second language (SL) or foreign language (FL) for a variety of reasons, respectively

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(Baniadam, 2018). With regard to English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, Istifci (2019) clarified that EFL context refers to a setting in which people learn English in a formal setting without any contact with the target language (TL) outside, while in ESL context, English is routinely used in daily life. Saudi Arabia is one of the countries where English is learned as a foreign language. In fact, it is not only the foreign language in schools (Masrahi, 2016) but also the medium of instruction in university (Almulhim, 2014).

In EFL or ESL contexts, there are some situations that speakers frequently switch from second language (LS) to first language (L1) to meet communication demands (Bhatti, Shamsudin, and Mat Said 2018). This phenomenon of alternation between languages is known as code-switching. According to Baniadam (2018), switching among speakers is a means to handle the situation as they prefer, and to convey a subtle difference in or shade of meaning in their interaction. Thus, code-switching is a worldwide phenomenon in bilingual and multilingual societies, especially in foreign language classrooms wherein the teachers and the students utilize two languages within a single conversation and even within a single utterance (Istifci, 2019). This phenomenon occurs more commonly in the informal contexts where participants of the conversations are among friends, family members as well as the education context especially at the tertiary level. Sardar, Mahdi, and Mohd (2015) define code as any system of signals, such as numbers and words that conveys concrete meaning. Yao (2011) considers code as a neutral concept that represents the system that is employed by two or more speakers in the conversation.

Code-switching has been defined in numerous ways by different researchers according to the focus of their studies in ESL and EFL learning contexts. Generally, Moghadam et al. (1995) define code-switching as a nonstandard use of L2 within an L1 situation by bilinguals or even those who speak two or more languages in the same conversation. Nguyen, Grainger, and Carey (2016) define code-switching as an alternative use of the target language and the mother tongue by either teachers or students in a classroom setting. According to Itmeizeh, Ibnian, and Sha'fout. (2017), code-switching is defined as a phenomenon that exists in bilingual societies where people have the opportunity to use two or more languages to communicate. Being able to speak more than one language, bilinguals can code-switch and use their languages as resources to find better ways to convey meaning. Accordingly, Jamshidi and Navehebrahim (2013) describe CS as a phenomenon of switching from one language to another in the same discourse. One of the latest definitions is given by Bhatti et al., (2018) as the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence, or constituent. Code-switching occurs when the teacher or students change from one language to another during the course of instruction. More often, it can occur when a speaker starts his conversation in a language, then changes it to another language in the middle of his speech. These switches generally occur between the turns of different speakers engaged in conversation, utterances within a single turn and even in a single utterance from time to time. However, this study relies on Sardar et al's (2013) definition that considers code-switching as the process of shifting "from one language to the other in mid-speech" when all of the speakers involved in the conversation know the same languages.

The topic of code-switching between English and the first language has witnessed a heated debate among many researchers and specialists in the fields of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) over the past period (Baniadam, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2016). Some researchers see it as merely an obstacle to achieve a learning goal that is to acquire the target language. (Nurhamidah et al., 2018; Mareva, 2016). They oppose code-switching to L1 and favor using only L2 in classroom for many reasons. Firstly, they see that code-switching should not be allowed in second language classrooms as it may hinder the learning process. This is based on the argument that learners may depend too much on teachers' code-switching. They may lose their eagerness to learn and the ability to guess and infer in new linguistic environments of the second language. Secondly, it might cause confusion and fossilization and internalization of errors in learners. Frequent use of code-switching might influence the way learners communicate in the second language later (Almulhim, 2014). A third reason is that they put forward that exclusive use of the target language makes the classroom seem more real and authentic. A fourth reason is that EFL/ESL learners lack chances of exposure to the target language outside the classroom. Students, as well as, teachers don't speak the target language in daily lives after class. Similarly, As Sert (2005) states, "teachers who prefer to use the communicative techniques in language teaching, oppose any form of native language use during classroom instruction". Momenian and Samar (2011) also report that some teachers and researchers believe that switching to the first language is a kind of negative transfer, and they try hard to minimize its use so as to maximize the exposure to and use of the target language in the classroom.

On the other hand, many language educators such as Mahd and Almalki (2019) and Bhatti et al., (2018) support code switching and favor using L1 to some extent in the classroom. They agree that the purposeful and appropriate use of the mother tongue can facilitate the English teaching process and improve the learner's English competence. Evidently, this saves time and helps minimize confusion among learners. Learners find this as a motivating factor in learning the second language as they do not perceive the language as difficult to learn (Almelhi, 2020; Mareva, 2016). Besides, Istifci (2019) claims that "teacher's use of the target language should be maximized in the classroom and this is a reasonable practice because the teachers are often the students' main source of linguistic input on the target language." In the same vein, Tabaeifard (2014) says "It may be more acceptable to claim that code-switching should be allowed whenever necessary with some learners in specific situations".

However, some researchers claim that switching to L1 may have some benefits (Istifci, 2019; Levine, 2011), and careful and limited use of the L1 should be employed (Bhatti et al., 2018). In accordance with this claim, Almelhi (2020) believes that code switching is natural in a language classroom and teachers should not discourage students from using it. He argues that "the maximization of L2 in the classroom does not mean that the L1 should be avoided altogether" (Sardar Et al., 2015). Nordin, Ali, Zubir, and Sadjirin (2013) claim that using L1 may save time instead of using only the target language. In a similar vein, Masrahi (2016) argues that students' L1 uses may be encouraged in order to provide more remarkable input for the learner. Similarly, Sert (2005) claims that "code-switching

is an inevitable way of communication among bilinguals; thus, using one language only is unnatural in a multilingual classroom." Furthermore, as Almulhim (2014) states, code-switching may support communication and students' speech attempts in order to learn in the classroom.

Though code-switching has been studied extensively in different contexts aiming at describing, quantifying, and interpreting teachers and learners' codeswitching (CS) in class (Almelhi, 2020; Istifci, 2019; Maguddayao, 2019; Mahd and Almalki, 2019 and Bhatti et al., 2018), few studies have focused on EFL proficiency and students' perceptions and uses of code-switching. The present study intends to explore the perceptions of EFL students with various proficiency levels toward code-switching in the Saudi context. Another objective of the study is to make recommendations for EFL teachers according to the results of the analyses regarding the students' attitudes across various proficiency levels toward teachers' code-switching. As the students' attitudes across various proficiency levels toward this phenomenon have been scantly paid attention to systematically in foreign language classrooms, the study seems to be of significance.

The term "code-switching" is sometimes written as codeswitching or code switching. Our preference is to spell code-switching with a hyphen, and this preferred spelling of code-switching and its acronym (CS) will be used throughout this paper. However, the original spelling of this term will be preserved in direct quotations and references.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

CS is a very popular phenomenon that occurs almost in any language class. This situation is very evident in the EFL classes held in Saudi Arabia. Due to poor proficiency in English, most Saudi EFL learners sometimes resort to mixing English with their mother tongue during instruction (Al-Enezi, 2010). Similarly, Almulhim (2014) states that the majority of the Saudi students who study English as a foreign language at a university level adopt the phenomenon of CS in their daily conversations with their peers of the same first language (L1). However, most of them are not aware of the negative consequences of the frequent use of CS on their EL proficiency as well as their future career. According to Masrahi (2016), code switching which happens regularly among less proficient FL speakers might be due to the speakers' limited knowledge of the target language or their difficulties in recalling "the suitable structure or lexicon" of Foreign language which is English in this study. Sert (2005) argues that the frequent use of CS will have a long-term undesirable influence on the speakers' L2 acquisition since it may cause a loss of fluency in L2. Therefore, the more frequently L2 learners use code switching, the higher chance for them to encounter fluency loss in learning the target language, English in this case. As a result, learners might encounter demotivation and lack of confidence in learning the target language. Sert (2005) highlights that recurrent use of code switching leads the students to lose their interest in acquiring the target language since they know that there is always a chance to code switch when they have difficulties in the target language so they will not try to master the target language proficiently.

 On the other hand, Sert (2005) states that code switching might be a useful system for the speakers to fully express themselves so it can be perceived as "a way of modifying

language for the sake of personal intentions" (P. 2). Tabaeifard (2014) also claims that "speakers switch to manipulate or influence or define the situation as they wish and to convey nuances of meaning and personal intention (105)". Thus, code switching can help the speakers in their self-expression among a group of speakers who have common L1 and L2. In addition, CS will assist the speakers in creating intimate interpersonal relationships with other members of a bilingual community. Hence, CS can be considered as a method for "creating linguistic solidarity especially between individuals who share the same ethno-cultural identity (Sert, 2005)."

Although numerous empirical and theoretical studies have been done in the area of CS, there have not been adequate researches in the Saudi bilingual settings (Masrahi, 2016). Therefore, the lack of research in the CS field in Saudi Arabia was a significant gap that the current study attempts to address. Another important gap is that scant attention has been systematically paid to this phenomenon among Saudi students with various proficiency levels of English in the EFL classrooms. In addition, no study, to the best knowledge of the researcher, has been conducted on the perceptions and attitudes of Saudi EFL students with various language proficiencies towards the uses of code-switching. This deficiency of research is specifically astonishing, given the calls for further researches in this field. Therefore, the current study seeks to bridge this gap and explore the perceptions of EFL students with various proficiency levels toward code-switching in the Saudi context.

THIS STUDY

Based on a comprehensive survey of the literature, no similar study could be found in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this study could attract the scholars' and educators' attention to investigate the relationship between English proficiency and CS. Additionally, this study can be of valuable significance to language instructors and students as it provides a better understanding of the nature, factors and functions of code-switching and its benefits in accelerating language learning. This study would also contribute to the existing literature on code-switching, particularly on the use of code-switching students with various proficiency levels in the EFL classes. Besides, the information on the participants' English Language competence is particularly important as it may be able to account for the students' language behavior in the classroom. The information gained from this study would also provide insights on the reasons for the use of code-switching in language skill classrooms and its functions as a language tool in EFL classrooms. The study also highlights the factors which influence the students to code-switch in the classroom. In addition, the results could help EFL learners be aware of the nature of code-switching, its factors and functions. The findings can also be of valuable significance to policy makers in terms of the role of English in the university's instructional settings. Finally, this study would also act as a platform for future researchers to explore new dimensions of code-switching as an important language tool. This study seeks to answer the following research question: Do learners' perceptions of code-switching differ across various proficiency levels of English?

More specifically, the following research sub-questions were derived from the above overarching question:

1.What are the attitudes of students with various proficiency levels (i.e., High, mid, and low) towards the uses of code-switching in EFL classes?

2.What are the perceptions and practices of students with various proficiency levels towards the factors of code-switching in EFL classes?

3. What are the perceptions and practices of students with various proficiency levels towards the functions of code-switching in EFL classes?

4. What are the perceptions and practices of students with various proficiency levels towards teachers' code-switching?

5. What are the perceptions and practices of students with various proficiency levels on the impact of the usage of code-Switching on EFL learning and teaching?

METHOD

Participant of the study

The participants were pre-determined and chosen based on their ability to provide opportunity to achieve the objectives of the study. Thus, they were only selected if they responded positively to the invitation to take part in the study and consented to the data collection and analysis. They were selected among sixty-four Saudi EFL university students with the age range of 21-22. Their linguistic homogeneity was established through an Oxford Placement Test (OPT). Sex was controlled (all of the subjects were male). The information on the participants' English Language competence is particularly important as it may be able to account for the instructors' language behavior in the classroom.

Research Design

The choice of data collection methods is dependent on the research questions and aspects of the research, which are of interest to the researcher. Therefore, the method of data collection is determined by the types of data that need to be collected in order to answer the research questions. In this study, triangulation was used by incorporating quantitative and qualitative data obtained from questionnaires, lesson observations, as well as, conducting structured interviews to cross-validate the research findings of the study. Data were collected in order to obtain a better understanding of the code-switching practices in ESL classrooms.

Instruments

The data collection tools used in the present study are a questionnaire, an observation schedule, and an interview. Observation and interview responses were used to supplement and triangulate the questionnaire data.

Oxford Placement Test

Sixty non-native speakers were recruited from two English-major classes at Qassim University. The subjects' proficiency levels were determined by Oxford Placement Test. The test was developed by the College of Oxford (2014). The test consists of 100 questions, and it covers the four language skills. Based on their scores in the proficiency test, the research subjects were classified into the high-proficiency group, the mid-proficiency group and the low-proficiency group. The results of the independent t-test on the scores of the OPT listening test showed that there is a significant difference between the high-proficiency group, the mid-proficiency group and the low-proficiency group (see table 1).

Table 1. Proficiency test results

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig.
HIGH	18	92.7778	2.57946	.60798	152.517	.000
MEDUM	20	78.8000	4.94815	1.10644	71.174	.000
LOW	26	60.9231	5.49125	1.07692	56.525	.000

Questionnaire

The second research instrument was a closed 35-item questionnaire which was administered to student participants with a standardized two-point Likert scale for all of the items. The questionnaire was utilized for gathering information on the students' attitudes regarding the uses of code-switching among Saudi EFL students with various proficiency levels. The questionnaire items were adapted from many related research studies including the ones conducted in the EFL context (such as Yao, 2011; Momenian and Samar, 2011; Ariffin and Husin, 2011; Ahmad and Jusoff, 2008).) and modified by the researcher for the purposes of this study. The questionnaire attempts to elicit the responses of English-major undergraduates of Qassim University related to the use of code-switching in EFL classes. The questionnaire comprised of five main sections. The first section dealt with the attitudes of students with various proficiency levels towards the use of code-switching in the ESL classroom. The second section was designed to explore the perceptions of low, mid, and high achievers towards the factors of code-switching in EFL classes. The third one elicited the perceptions of low, mid and high achievers towards the functions of code-switching in EFL classes. The fourth section focused on perceptions of high, mid and low achievers toward teacher code-switching. The last section contained 15 statements to investigate the perceptions of high, mid and low achievers towards the Impact of the Usage of Code-Switching on EFL learning and teaching.

For the questionnaire used in the present study, expert opinion was received basically for content validity and some points were altered accordingly. The experts were academicians in the field of ELT focusing on research techniques in applied linguistics. The questionnaire was then piloted with a smaller group for validity and reliability (r=0.71) and some items were dropped or modified. The final versions of the questionnaire were administered to students. Accordingly, the adopted questionnaire

included 60 items. A 2 point-Likert scale was used where students were requested to give their honest views. The scale comprised agree and disagree.

Through the data produced by the questionnaire, frequencies were sought so as to come up with specific patterns. It was decided to count the frequencies for every item in the questionnaire, and then compare and contrast low, mid and advanced students.

Semi-structured Interviews

The second instrument utilized by the researcher for the collection of data was the interview sessions. Interviews were carried out to complement the questionnaire data. The researcher managed to collect descriptive data expressed by the participants during the interview sessions. Semi-structured interview questions were prepared and conducted with twelve English language students (4 high level, 4 mid-level and 4 low level) to gather information about their opinions and comments on the use of code-switching in EFL classes. The researcher had asked the class in advance whether anyone would be interested in being interviewed. Twelve students volunteered and the researcher decided to split them up into three groups to ensure that everyone would get to participate.

Before the interview session, the researcher made preparations to make sure that the research participants are ready and willing to be interviewed on the use of code-switching. At the beginning of the interview session, the researcher thanked the participants for participating in the study. Then, the researcher described the aim of the study to the participants, and the interviewees were guaranteed that their personal information and their ideas about code-switching would be used for research purposes. In the meanwhile, when interviews were being held, they were audio-recorded and the medium of the language was Arabic and English. Using Arabic as well English, hence, helped the participants to feel safe and discuss their perceptions with confidence. It is worth noting that the researchers did not impose any ideas on the interviewees. As a final point, the sessions were terminated by asking the interviewees if there was anything they wanted to add.

Samples of the interview questions

The questions of the interview session are mentioned below.

1. Do you think code-switching (English to Arabic) use in EFL classroom is useful?

2. What benefits do you get from code switching use?

3. Does code switching disturb your concentration when learning English?

4. Does code switching help you in understanding English? Why?

5. What is your opinion about the teacher who uses code-switching?

6. what is the impact of using code switching in teaching and learning English?

Observation

The last tool used in the present study to unearth additional information was the observation. The researcher attempts to observe classroom activities and supplement these observations with interviews to assess students' views of code-switching.

Creswell (2012) defines observation as "A process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at a research site" (p. 213). Classroom observation was chosen to enable the researcher to observe how students use code-switching in class when students code-switch and why these events occur

It also provided the opportunity to observe learners' participation and the challenges they encountered in learning English. The observation tool was used to ascertain the connection between what is happening in the classroom and the theoretical assumptions made regarding the research questions as observation is the means by which researcher establishes a connection between reality and their theoretical assumptions (Tabaeifard, 2014) without relying on secondary sources.

To tap and delve deeper into the practices of high, mid, and low students with respect to the use of code-switching, 10 observations were organized. Observation resources were obtained from students' usual in-class performance. All the observations were done in specialized courses such as Linguistics, Grammar, and sociolinguistics at level six from the English department, Qassim University. Being participant observant, the researcher adopted a sample form of observation sheet to record students' performance in each class. The researcher got ample space to collect audio-taped samples ina naturalistic socio-linguistic context. Then, the researcher in the process of observing the specialized courses took a neutral position and did not interfere in the process of teacher-student interactions. Alongside observing the classes, the researcher took field notes and for the purposes of further scrutiny and analysis of data, all the observed classes were audio-taped by the consent of the teachers and students.

Data analysis

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative method to analyze data. The analytical techniques of data were statistically based on questionnaires, observations and interviews. Based on the questionnaires' outcome, the data was analyzed quantitatively using SPSS to conduct frequencies and percentages. The data were presented in tables. The tables show the percentages needed. The data collected from the students' questionnaire was analyzed in relation to the purpose of the study. Also, in order to answer the research questions, to compare the perception of the students with various proficiency levels towards using code- switching in the class, their answers for each part of the questionnaire was compared using bar diagrams. The information recorded from the audio tapings of the semi-structured interview and the observation transcribed and the data coded and analyzed via cross-case analysis. The qualitative data were analyzed by means of content analysis. Content analysis is a method that involves comparing, contrasting and categorizing data in order to draw meanings from the data (Tabaeifard, 2014). That is, the common answers given by the students were listed to identify the general tendencies. Finally, the researcher grouped the responses into themes pre-

determined by the research questions namely: attitudes towards code switching, factors, and functions of code-switching and, the effect of code switching on the teaching and learning.

RESULTS

This section of results and discussion presents the analysis and results of the questionnaire, interview and observation tools which attempt to answer the research questions. Based on the questionnaires' results, the data was analyzed quantitatively, each item was discussed separately, and the frequency and percentage of each were reported. The data was presented in tables. The present study used a 50-item questionnaire using a 2-points Likert-type scale to investigate the uses of code-switching among Saudi EFL students with various language proficiency.

Results Related to Research Question 1: Attitudes of students with various proficiency levels towards the reasons for using CS in the ESL classroom

Table 2 clearly indicates the descriptive statistics of items related to research question one. Table 2 deals with the attitudes of students with various proficiency levels towards the reasons for using CS in the ESL classroom.

Table 2. Attitudes of students with various proficiency levels towards the reasons of using CS in the ESL classroom

Items	High EFL Students (18)				Mid EFL Students (20)				Low EFL Students (26)			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	N0.	%	No.	%	N0.	%	No.	%
1.I like to code switch in my English classes.	3	17.7	15	83.3	11	55	9	45	22	84.6	4	15.4
2.Code-switching makes the lesson interesting.	5	27.8	13	77.2	13	65	7	35	28	100	0	0
3.Code switching makes class more enjoyable.	4	22.2	14	77.8	13	65	7	35	28	100	0	0
4.Code-switching helps me to understand the difficult concepts better.	7	38.9	11	61.1	14	70	6	30	23	88.5	3	11.5
5.I use code switching in communicating with my classmates.	4	22.2	14	77.8	15	75	5	25	22	84.6	4	15.4
6.I use code switching in interacting with the English teachers.	2	11.1	16	88.9	14	70	6	30	26	100	0	0
7.Code switching helps me in getting the answer of the question from the teachers.	3	17.7	15	83.3	15	75	5	25	24	92.3	2	7.7
8. Code switching in the class should be controlled as much as possible.	16	88.9	2	11.1	9	45	11	55	4	15.4	22	84.6
9.Using code switching is a sign of unproficiency in English.	17	94.4	1	5.6	11	55	9	45	6	23.1	20	76.9
10. I feel comfortable when I use code switching	3	17.7	15	83.3	14	70	6	30	23	88.5	3	11.5

The first item in table 2 shows that mid and low proficient students (55%, 84.6%) like to codeswitch more than the high proficient group (17.7%) do. The response of high proficient group shows their disagreement with the adoption of code-switching in their EFL classrooms. On the contrary, the response of mid and low proficient students indicates that they have favorable perceptions toward the uses of code-switching in their EFL classrooms. This finding indicates that there are varying attitudes towards the use of code-switching among the three groups. This can be attributed to the proficiency level. This result is similar to that reached by Ariffin and Husin (2011) who found that the amount of code-switching in the classroom was largely related to the instructors' and students' English Language competence.

Concerning the second and third items in table 2, it has been noted that the high proficient students disagree that code-switching makes the lesson interesting (77.2%) and enjoyable (77.8%), while the mid and low proficient students show an agreement with (65%, 100%). This finding is similar to that reported by Ahmad and Jusoff (2009) who found that code-switching helped low proficient learners to enjoy their learning due to their ability to comprehend the teachers' input. The comprehensible input also allowed them to feel less stressed and become more comfortable to learn. Thus, the presence of psychological support makes learners feel more relaxed when learning the language. When they feel that they can follow the lesson and not feeling lost, they would look forward to learning more English.

Regarding item (4), low proficient students (88.5%) and mid proficient students (70%) agree that code-switching helps them to understand the difficult concepts better. On the contrary, the high proficient group showed disagreement with 61.1%. This implies that code-switching has a positive impact on low proficient students' learning process. This finding goes in accordance with that reached by Ahmad and Jusoff (2009) state that low proficiency students considered code-switching in their EFL classes as helpful towards gaining better comprehension especially when providing new concepts.

Item (5) indicates that many mid and low proficient students (75%, 84.6%) use code-switching in communicating with my classmates, only one high proficient group showed an agreement with 22.2%.

As displayed in the table below, item (6) shows that only two high proficient group (11.1%) agree that they use CS in interacting with the English teachers, while many mid and low proficient students (70%, 100%) agree with this statement. This finding is similar to that reached by Istifci (2019) who states that code switching fosters oral participation among the teacher and low proficient learners, and it is used to make the meaning of vocabulary clear, give instruction in carrying out tasks and encouraging learners to speak in English. Similarly, Rabab'ah and Al-Yasin (2016) suggest that the students of low proficiency believe that "this method encourages them to participate more effectively in the learning process". In the present study, it is found that Saudi EFL students switch to Arabic in order to interact and participate more in their language class.

Based on the table below, item (7) illustrates that the majority of the mid and low proficient students (70%, 92.3%) agree that code switching helps me in getting the

answer to the question from the teachers. On the other hand, the high proficient group show disagreement with 83.3%

With respect to Item (8) in table 2 below, it has been observed that mid and low proficient students (55%, 84.6%) disagree that code switching in the class should be controlled as much as possible. On the other hand, the high proficient group showed an agreement with 88.9%.

As it is seen from table 2 below, 94.4% of the highly proficient group showed an agreement to item (9), 'Using code switching is a sign of unproficiency in English'. The mid group expressed a considerable percentage of 55.6% strong agreement to this item and the low group indicated just 22.2% low agreement to the Item. This finding supported the result reached by Hanehsazzadeh and Darani (2017) who report that the reason why the mid and low proficient learners code-switches was two-fold. It was because either at that moment he forgot the very word which was required or he had deficiency in his linguistic knowledge. Similarly, Sert (2005) found that low proficient students code-switch because of a lack of language proficiency.

The last item illustrates that 83.3% of the high proficient group disagreed that feel comfortable when I use code switching, while a high percentage of mid and low proficient students (70%, 88.5%) agree with this statement. It means that mid and low proficient students are more comfortable with the teacher who teaches using both in English and Arabic. This finding concurs with that reached by Carson (2014) who mentioned that students with high proficiency felt that it was not important for the instructor to use the CS to test, joke around with students, or to help students feel more comfortable and confident. On the other hand, Carson adds that many students with lower proficiency preferred CS to be used to help them feel more comfortable or to feel less tense.

Results Related to Research Question 2: The perceptions of students with various proficiency levels towards the factors of code-switching in EFL

Table 3 presents the perceptions of low, mid and high students towards the factors of CO in EFL classes. Item (11) illustrates that a high percentage of low and mid proficiency respondents (84.6%,70%) agreed that code switching enhances the students' oral communication, whereas 77.2% of high proficiency respondents disagreed with this statement.

Table 3. the perceptions of students with various proficiency levels towards the factors of code-switching in EFL classes

Items	High EFL Students (18)				Mid EFL Students (20)				Low EFL Students (26)			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
11.Code switching enhances the students' oral communication.	5	27.8	13	77.2	14	70	6	30	22	84.6	4	15.4
12.I code switch to clarify misunderstanding.	8	44.4	10	55.6	15	75	5	25	23	88.5	3	11.5
13.I code switch to emphasize and elaborate the details.	7	38.9	11	61.1	15	75	5	25	26	100	0	0

14.I code switch to attract the attention of the listeners to the context of a conversation.	10	55.6	8	44.4	15	75	5	25	24	92.3	2	7.7
15.I code switch when I have limited English vocabulary.	4	22.2	14	77.8	11	55	9	45	26	100	0	0
16.I code switch to signify group identity.	10	55.6	8	44.4	15	75	5	25	13	50	13	50

Item (12) indicates that many mid and low respondents (75%, 88.5%) refer to "code switch to clarify misunderstanding." as the major factors that result in code-switching phenomenon. On the other hand, high proficient respondents (44.4%) refer to "clarify misunderstanding as the underlying factor that results in code switching occurrence. This finding confirmed the result reached by Carson (2014) who stated that the lowest proficiency students wanted to use CS to check for comprehension.

In respect to item no. (13), many low and mid proficiency respondents (75%, 100%) agree to code switch to emphasize and elaborate the details, while only 38.9% of the high proficient students agree with the statement.

Item no. (14) indicates that the three groups (55.6%, 75%, 92.3%) codeswitch to attract the attention of the listeners to the context of a conversation.

The data on table 3 above show that many low and mid proficiency (55%, 100%) respondents agree on the following item (15): they codeswitch because they have limited English vocabulary. On the contrary, three students of the high proficiency (22.2%) agree with the statement. Most students of low proficiency switch within word boundares in their conversations due to their inability to recall the terms in English. A study conducted by Mohammed et al., (2015) supports the findings of the present study that the participants used words in the first language in their daily communication since they were unable to recall the terms in English. Thus, the results obtained from the research study by Mohammed et al., (2015) are in accordance with the current study that the participants switch to the English language for reasons either they do not know the terms in English as they are unable to recall the words in L2.

Concerning item (16), it has been revealed that many high and mid proficiency respondents (55.6%, 75%) codeswitch to signify group identity. On the other hand, students of low proficiency respondents have an agreement with 50%. This finding is similar to that of Nguyen et al., (2016), and Rabab'ah and Al-Yasin (2016) who state that classroom CS can be used to develop the speakers' identities and to negotiate changes in frames and role relationships.

Based on the aforementioned factors of code-switching, it can be seen that students with various proficiency levels have different perceptions towards factors of using code-switching. To summarize, as depicted in table 3, students with low proficiency levels (the least proficient in English) appeared to prefer the most preference for CS support on all the factors, while those students with high proficiency levels (the most proficient) showed the least preference for CS support on all the factors. These results are similar to

the various classroom or pedagogical factors in which code-switching can be best used as discovered by other researchers (Hakim, 2015; Mahdi and Almalki, 2019; Carson, 2014).

7.3. Results Related to Research Question 2: The perceptions of students with various proficiency levels towards the functions of code-switching in EFL classes

Table 4 below attempts to detect if there are any similarities and differences among high, mid and low EFL students in terms of code-switching functions. The functions of code-switching are different among the three groups of participants in the study.

Table 4. the perceptions of students with various proficiency levels towards the functions of code-switching in EFL classes

Items	High EFL Students (18)				Mid EFL Students (20)				Low EFL Students (26)			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
	N0.	%	N0.	%	N0.	%	N0.	%	N0.	%	N0.	%
17 I switch to Arabic in my conversation because of deficiency in English.	2	11.1	16	88.9	11	55	9	45	22	84.6	4	15.4
18. I switch to Arabic to express my loyalty to my Arab culture	7	38.9	11	61.1	14	70	6	30	26	100	0	0
19. I switch to add a sense of humor to my utterances to draw attention	4	22.2	14	77.8	11	55	9	45	26	100	0	0
20. I switch to Arabic because it is hard to find proper English equivalents.	7	38.9	11	61.1	14	70	6	30	24	92.3	2	7.7
21. I switch to Arabic to make other students understand what I mean.	8	44.4	10	55.6	14	70	6	30	25	96.2	1	3.8
22. I switch to Arabic to show that I am well-educated	10	55.6	8	44.4	11	55	9	45	6	23.1	20	76.9
23. I feel comfortable in using my first language.	3	17.7	15	83.3	11	55	9	45	22	84.6	4	15.4
24. I do code switching when I want to do topic shift	8	44.4	10	55.6	11	55	9	45	23	88.5	3	11.5
25. I switch to Arabic to fill the stopgap with native language use.	8	44.4	10	55.6	15	75	5	25	25	96.2	1	3.8

When comparing the three groups, it has been noted that a high percentage of mid and low EFL students (55.6%, 88.9%) switch to Arabic in their conversation because of deficiency in English, whereas only 11.1% of high EFL students have an agreement with item (17). This means that the mid and low students resort to code switches in their native language due to the deficiency in linguistic competence of target language, which makes the student use the native lexical item when he/she has not the competence for using the target language explanation for a particular lexical item. So, code switching functions as a defensive mechanism for students as it gives the student the opportunity

to continue communication by bridging the gaps resulting from foreign language incompetence.

Item (18) shows that many mid and low students (70%, 100%) are found to employ code-switching to express their loyalty to their Arab culture more than high proficient students (38.9%).

When the three groups are compared in item (19), it has been noted that many mid and low students (55%, 100%) switch to add a sense of humor to their utterances to draw attention more than high proficient students (22.2%). According to the quantitative results, this is one of the main functions selected by students of low proficiency for code switching.

As shown in Table 4, the mid and low groups (70%, 92.3%) shared the same view and agreed to switch to Arabic because it is hard to find proper English equivalents, whereas only 38.9% of the high proficient group has an agreement with item (20). Students also show their support towards code-switching because it is very beneficial for them. This finding accords with that concluded by Nurhamidah et al., (2018) who state that students tend to code-switch because the speakers are unable to locate words or terms for the description of certain things in a particular language. Generally, this reason is more linguistically in nature. In such a case, the speakers use words from another language that they are more familiar with to express the intended meaning. In addition, Mohammed et al., (2015) state the same reason as to why speakers switch code in their speeches when they could not find the equivalent meaning or word in a particular language.

Item (21) illustrates that many mid and low students (70%, 96.2%) are found to employ code-switching to "switch to Arabic to make other students understand what they mean" more than high proficient students (44.4%) do. This finding supports the results obtained by Rabab'ah and Al-Yasin (2016) who found that teachers used code switching by posing a question or a comment to ensure the students' comprehension of the teacher's input, and students respond.

In responses to item no.22, more than half of the high and mid proficient students (55.6%, 55%) switch to Arabic to show that they well-educated, while only 23.1% of low proficient students agree with this statement.

In another item (24) from the questionnaire, many mid and low groups (55%, 88.5%) do code switching when they want to do the topic shift, 44.4% of high proficient students do that.

Item 25 illustrates that only 44.4% of high EFL students code switches to Arabic to fill the gaps in communication. On the contrary, the majority of mid and low EFL students (77.8%, 94.4%) agree to code switches to fill the stopgap with native language use (Item, 25). It may be suggested that this is a mechanism used by the students with mid and low proficiency in order to avoid gaps in communication, which may result from the lack of fluency in the target language. This finding is in agreement with that reached by Shanehsazzadeh and Darani (2017) who mention that low learners would like to code-switches to fill the gap. Similarly, Rabab'ah and Al-Yasin (2016) considered the use of fillers as a communication strategy, in which L2 learner uses filling words to fill pause

and to gain time to think. This gives the teacher time to think of the possible structure or language item needed. The learners performing code switching for floor holding generally have the same problem: they cannot recall the appropriate target language structure or lexicon. It may be claimed that this type of language alternation may have negative effects on learning a foreign language; since it may result in loss of fluency in the long term.

Based on the aforementioned functions of code-switching, it has been noted that It can be seen that code-switching was used by the teachers to perform various classroom functions. These results are similar to the various classroom or pedagogical functions in which code-switching can be best used as discovered by other researchers (Sardar et al., 2015; Sert, 2005).

Results Related to Research Question 4: Perceptions of students with various proficiency levels toward teacher code-switching

As mentioned earlier, the fourth aim of the present study was to find out Perceptions' attitudes toward their teachers' use of CO.

Table 5. perceptions of students with various proficiency levels toward teacher code-switching

Items	High EFL Students (18)				Mid EFL Students (20)				Low EFL Students (26)			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
26.I like my teacher to code switch in my English class.	1	5.6	17	94.4	15	75	5	25	23	88.5	3	11.5
27.Teachers who switch codes from English to Arabic or from Arabic to English can express themselves clearly in both languages	3	17.7	15	83.3	11	55	9	45	22	84.6	4	15.4
28 I think my teacher should speak less Arabic during lessons.	13	77.2	5	27.8	10	50	10	50	4	15.4	22	84.6
29.I would like my teacher to use English only.	16	88.9	2	11.1	6	30	14	70	3	11.5	23	88.5
30.Teachers who switch code from English to Arabic can better explain the grammatical points in the text.	4	22.2	14	77.8	12	60	8	40	26	100	0	0
31.Teachers who switch code from English to Arabic can better explain new vocabulary items	3	17.7	15	83.3	13	65	7	35	23	88.5	3	11.5
32.Teachers' code switching facilitates learning process.	1	5.6	17	94.4	13	65	7	35	24	92.3	2	7.7
33.I feel teacher violates the rules of English when he switches codes.	18	100	0	0	15	75	5	25	0	0	26	100
34.I could become more proficient in English if the teacher doesn't switch codes entirely.	17	94.4	1	5.6	9	45	11	55	3	11.5	23	88.5

35.I feel frustrated when an EFL teacher uses code switching in his lectures.	14	77.8	4	22.2	5	25	15	75	0	0	26	100
36.I am unable to concentrate on lecture when the teacher switches code from English to Arabic.	15	83.3	3	17.7	7	35	13	65	2	7.7	24	92.3
37.A teacher who switches codes from English to Arabic is not proficient in English.	16	88.9	2	11.1	9	45	11	55	4	15.4	22	84.6
38.Mixing of Arabic and English strengthens my English.	1	5.6	17	94.4	9	45	11	55	23	88.5	3	11.5
39.Teacher's code-switching weakens my English.	17	94.4	1	5.6	10	50	10	50	1	5.6	17	94.4
40.Teachers who switch code from English to Arabic create a better classroom atmosphere.	3	17.7	15	83.3	13	65	7	36	23	88.5	3	11.5
41.I respect more the teacher when teaching in Arabic and English.	1	5.6	17	94.4	12	60	8	40	24	92.3	2	7.7

Table 5 above displays that most of the high proficient students (94.4%) do not agree with teacher code-switching in the classroom (Item, 26). On the other hand, many mid and low proficient students have positive attitudes towards teacher's code-witching in the class with a high percentage (75%, 88.5%). The reason behind the high agreement among mid and low proficient students can be ascribed to their low proficiency in English.

The results of students' answers to item no. (27) in the fourth part of the questionnaire show that most of the high proficient students (about 83.3%) disagree that code switching enables the teachers to express themselves clearly in both languages because they may cause difficulty in comprehending. On the other hand, many mid and low proficient students (55%, 84.6%) have a positive feeling about this phenomenon. This finding is in line with reached by Tabaeifard (2014) who indicates that many mid and low proficient students "strongly agree" with the opinion that teachers who switch codes are capable of expressing themselves easily and clearly in both languages. Very few high proficient students in his study agreed.

According to item (28) in table 5, many participants of high proficiency (77.2 %) want that EFL teacher should use minimum L1 (Arabic) in the lectures. On the other hand, the majority of mid and low proficient students (50%, 84.6%) doesn't agree with this statement. This finding is in line with that reached by Ibrahim (2013) who believes that teachers' moderate codeswitching is tolerable as long as the switches do not interfere with the essential processes of the learning itself.

Item 29 illustrates that the majority of participants of high proficiency (88.9%) would like their teacher to use English only. This finding concurs with that of Shariati (2018) who indicates that some writers maintain that L1 has not an essential role to play in EFL teaching and that too much L1 use might deprive learners of appreciated input in the L2. On the contrary, many mid and low proficient students (70%, 88.5%) have a

disagreement with this statement. This result support the views of many researchers have started to appreciate the role of L1 in the EFL classroom and think of ways to best include it in EFL teaching (Weng, 2012; Sert, 2005).

It could be seen from table 5 above that many mid and low proficient students (60%,100%) view that teachers who switch code from English to Arabic can better explain the grammatical points in the text (item, 30). Only about 22.2% of the high proficient students agree with explanation of grammar in Arabic and this shows that the students have serious problems in learning grammar when it is taught in Arabic to them. This finding is in line with that reached by Rahimi and Jafari (2011) who state that more than three quarters of the low proficient students believed that the application of their native language would lead to better understanding of the grammar points and structures. According to Tabaeifard (2014), teachers code-switch when the level of English used in the textbook or to be taught is beyond the learner's ability or when the teachers have exhausted the means to adjust his speech to the learner's level.

Item 31 illustrates that many mid and low proficient students (65%, 88.5%) see that teachers who switch code from English to Arabic can better explain new vocabulary items, whereas only 17.7% of high proficient students agree. This might be interpreted by the fact that vocabulary and grammar are the bases to learn the foreign language.

Table 5 above shows that 94.4% of high proficient students disagreed that teachers' code switching facilitates the learning process, whereas the majority of the mid and low proficient students (65%,92.3%) disagreed on this item (32). This finding is in accordance with that reached by Hakim et al., (2019) and Rabab'ah, and Al-Yasin (2016) who also state that first language is possible to be a facilitating factor, and it harmonizes different capacities regarding language competency.

Item 34 illustrates that % 94.4of high proficient students state that they could become more proficient in English if the teacher doesn't switch codes entirely, whereas mid and low proficient students (55%, 88.5%) disagree with this statement.

Table 5 above is about students' feelings when an EFL teacher uses both languages (Arabic and English) in his lectures. 77.8% of high proficient students feel frustrated because of their teacher's use of code-switching, 22. 2% disagree with item (35). Many mid and low proficient students (75%, 100%) don't feel frustrated when their EFL teachers use Arabic and English language together.

It was shown in table 5 above that many high and mid proficient students (83.3%, 35%) agreed that they are unable to concentrate on lecture when the teacher switches code from English to Arabic. In contrast, low proficient students (92.3%) disagree with this statement (36). This finding goes in accordance with reached by Memory, Nkengbeza, and Liswaniso (2018) who report that many low proficient learners in their study indicate that code-switching has a good influence on their learning of English. However, another learner with high proficiency in his study states that when the teacher codeswitches to the first language, learners tend to make noise and they do not pay attention to the teacher, but when he starts teaching in English, they pay attention. From his view, this is a sign that in their class they do not like codeswitching at all.

Item 37 concerns students' attitudes towards the relationship between teachers' code-switching and their proficiency in languages. The results of the item indicate that the majority high proficient students (88.9%) agreed that teachers who code switch from English to Arabic are not proficient in English. On the contrary, many mid and low proficient students (55%, 84.6%) disagreed on this item. This result is in line with Ariffin and Husin who reveal that some of the students in their study admitted that the proficient instructors insisted on delivering their lectures in English and encourage students to improve their English language competence in order to cope with any language difficulties they might face. However, it is very important to note that instructors' own proficiency level could not account for the actual language use in the context of interaction. It is found that even the proficient instructors were not able to maintain their speech in English and have to resort to their first language because they needed to accommodate students who were not competent in English. This finding is also similar to that reached by Asghar et al (2016) who state that low proficient students in his study disagreed" with this opinion that teachers who switch codes are deficient in English. As a whole, with regard to the result of this item, it can be concluded that most of the students acknowledged the relationship between code-switching and teachers' persona.

As can be seen in table 5 above, there is a wide agreement among mid and low proficient participants of the positive effects of code switching in strengthening the foreign language, which is a desirable effect amongst foreign students as expressed by the students (65%, 88.5%): "Mixing of Arabic and English strengthens my English". On the other hand, many high proficient students (94.4%) agree that the code switching does not strengthen their English (item 38). However, by comparing the previous two items, one can see the students' perception of the code-switching effect is not the same with the three groups. It appears that the code switching has more negative effect on the high proficient students than mid and low proficient participants.

In respect to item 39, the majority of English high proficient students (94.4%) agree that teacher's code-switching weakens their English. This finding is similar to that reached by Hanehsazzadeh and Darani (2017) who claimed that teachers' codeswitching will slow down the rate of learning TL. On the contrary, many mid and low proficient students (50%, 94.4%) disagreed, they believed that code-switching has strengthen their English.

Regarding item no. 40, it is noted that a minor number of high proficient students (17.7%) feel that teachers who switch code from English to Arabic create a better classroom atmosphere, while a high percentage of mid and low proficient students (65%, 88.5%) have a positive agreement with the same statement. This finding goes in accordance with that reached by Istifci (2019) who states that low proficient students in his study view that function of teachers' code-switching can be found in creating a supportive language environment in the classroom and maintaining discipline. As Sert (2005) states, the teacher changes codes to build intimate relations with the students. He also finds out that code switching was used to create a more comfortable atmosphere in the EFL classroom by using humor.

The last item (41) reflects how much mid and low proficient students respect more their teacher when teaching in Arabic and English. The majority of mid and low proficient

students (60%, 92.3%) agree that they give more respect to the teachers who use code-switching when they teach, while the high proficient students showed disagreement with 94.4%. This finding is in line with the result of Alenezi (2010) who states that the students in his study respect the instructor more when they are teaching in both Arabic and English.

Regarding the findings drawn from the table above, these attitudes were largely influenced by the students' English Language proficiency. It seems that the less proficient students held more favorable attitudes towards teacher's code-switching. On the other hand, the more proficient group held quite unfavorable attitudes towards the usage of code-switching in the classroom by the EFL teachers. They consider teachers who switch codes from English to Arabic are not proficient in English.

Results Related to Research Question 5: Perceptions of students with various proficiency levels towards the impact of the usage of code-switching on EFL learning and teaching

Table 6 below displays perceptions of high, mid and low achievers towards the impact of the usage of code-switching on EFL learning and teaching.

Table 6. perceptions of students with high, mid and low proficiency towards the Impact of the Usage of Code-Switching on EFL learning and teaching

Items	High EFL Students (18)				Mid EFL Students (20)				Low EFL Students (26)			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
42.I think code switching to Arabic is an effective strategy for learning and teaching English.	2	11.1	16	88.9	15	75	5	25	23	88.5	3	11.5
43.Code switching helps me to understand new vocabulary.	7	38.9	11	61.1	13	65	7	35	22	84.6	4	15.4
44.Code switching helps to understand new grammatical structures.	4	22.2	14	77.8	13	65	7	35	23	88.5	3	11.5
45.Code switching is helpful in maintaining discipline in a large class.	3	17.7	15	83.3	13	65	7	35	23	88.5	3	11.5
46.code-switching is harmful to teaching and learning English.	16	88.9	2	11.1	9	45	11	55	3	11.5	23	88.5
47.code-switching is beneficial to teaching and learning English.	2	11.1	16	88.9	15	75	5	25	23	88.5	3	11.5
48.Without code switching the class becomes monotonous for the students.	1	5.6	17	94.4	13	65	7	35	22	84.6	4	15.4
49.Teaching the course only in one language (Eng.) is beneficial to me.	0	0	18	100	9	45	11	55	3	11.5	23	88.5
50.Code-switching will have a long-term undesirable influence on their loss of fluency in EFL.	16	88.9	2	11.1	10	50	10	50	8	30.8	18	69.2

Item 42 indicates that the majority of high proficient students (88.9%) disagree on the statement "I think code switching to Arabic is an effective strategy for learning and teaching English". On the contrary, a high percentage of mid and low proficient students (75%, 88.5%) have an agreement with the previous item. This result confirmed the findings of Shanehsazzadeh and Darani (2017) who demonstrated that code-switching was an effective strategy among mid and low proficiency level EFL learners and it could increase their motivation and interaction in the class discussions. This finding is also in line with that reached by Ahmad and Jusoff (2009) who point out that teachers' code-switching in the language classroom is a valid asset for low proficiency learners. In the same vein, Nguyen et al., (2016) state that code-switching is reported not to be a restriction on the acquisition of English; rather, it can facilitate the teaching and learning of general English in Vietnam. This practice of code-switching is not just due to a lack of sufficient proficiency to maintain a conversation in English; rather, it serves a number of pedagogic functions such as explaining new words and grammatical rules, giving feedback, checking comprehension, making comparison between English and Vietnamese, establishing good rapport between teachers and students, creating a friendly classroom atmosphere and supporting group dynamics.

In teaching new vocabulary, the majority of the mid and low respondents (65%, and 84.6%) viewed that code switching helped them to understand new vocabulary, whereas 61.1% of high proficiency level EFL learners disagreed with that item (43). Similarly, many mid and low respondents (65%, and 88.5%) viewed that code switching helped them to understand new grammatical structures. On the other hand, 77.8 of high proficiency level EFL learners disagreed with this statement (44). This finding is in consistent with Momenian and Samar (2011) who say, *"In teaching new vocabulary and grammatical structures, the mid and low respondents' comprehension increases if their teacher uses code-switching which seemed to be more due to the current proficiency level of students rather than the instructional potential of L1 in teaching a second language"* (p.15). Similarly, Carson (2014) found evidence supporting the usefulness of CS for lexical acquisition in conjunction with focus on form.

Table 6 above indicates that the mid and low respondents (65%, and 88.5%) thought that that code switching is helpful in maintaining discipline in a large class. On the other hand, 83.3 of high proficiency level EFL learners disagreed with this statement (45). This finding concurs with the result reported by Memory et al., (2018) who mention that code-switching is appropriate when used for socializing and organizing the class. According to them, speaking English only sometimes could not get the students' attention, but they showed to pay more attention when the teacher switches to the first language.

In response to item 46, which states that "code-switching is harmful to teaching and learning English", the data show the agreement of many high proficiency level EFL learners (88.9%). In contrast, many mid and low proficient respondents (55%, and 88.5%) disagreed with the same statement. This finding is similar to that reached by Hakim et al., (2019) who state that code switching is helpful and useful to teach English in the EFL classroom. Besides, there are several benefits stated by the students that they got from code switching use in EFL classroom: making students learn English easily,

improving their vocabularies and grammar, improving their listening skills, helping them to understand difficult materials, encourage them to speak English, dismisses confusion in learning activity, make them more confident in learning English.

Regarding item (47), only two students of high proficient students (11.1%) felt that code-switching in the EFL classroom is beneficial, whereas a high percentage of mid and low proficiency level EFL learners (75%, 88.5%) agree on the same item. This finding is line with the results of Ahmad and Jusoff (2009) show that a small number of the high proficient respondents felt that code switching had a positive impact on the teaching and learning process. The majority of the low respondents viewed code switching as having a positive impact on the teaching and/or learning. A considerable number of the mid respondents indicated that code switching had a neutral impact on the teaching and/or learning.

It could be seen from the table above that many mid and low respondents (65%, 84.6%) see that without code switching the class becomes monotonous for them (item. 48). This finding supports that reached by Rashid (2014) who states that English only class makes the class lifeless and students get bored with it. To keep away the monotony of the class, teachers bring L1carefully. However, the high proficiency level EFL learners (94.4%) disagreed with this statement.

To item 49, responses elicited also show that all the high proficiency level EFL learners believe that teaching the course only in one language (Eng.) is beneficial to them. This finding goes in accordance with that reached by Alenez (2010) who states that students in his study strongly agreed that it was beneficial to them to be taught the course in one language. In contrast, the mid and low respondents (50%, and 88.5%) disagreed with the same statement. This finding is in consistent with that reached by Memory et al., (2018) who state that the use of code-switching helps students with lower performance to be able to follow the lessons better than using English only. They also showed that code-switching was beneficial for the students' understanding. It reduced students' stress by not worrying about what to say because they could switch to Thai when they didn't have an idea of how to say it in English.

Table 6 above indicates that a high percentage of high and mid proficient learners (88.9%, 60%) agreed that code-switching will have a long-term undesirable influence on their loss of fluency in EFL. In contrast, 69.2% of the low respondents disagreed this statement (Item, 50). Therefore, the more frequently high proficient learners use code switching, the higher chance for them to encounter fluency loss in learning the target language, English in this case. As a result, learners might encounter demotivation and lack of confidence in learning the target language. This finding is similar to that reached by Sardar et al., (2018) who highlight that the recurrent use of code switching leads the high proficient students to lose their interest in acquiring the target language since they know that there is always a chance to code switch when they have difficulties in the target language so they will not try to master the target language proficiently.

Based on the findings in the table above, it can be inferred that code switching has a great impact on the low proficient students' academic performances and it is seen as an

influential teaching tool to facilitate learning and therefore helps increase student involvement. However, the high proficient students prefer to use the target language only in teaching their courses.

Code-switching should not be considered as a sign of defect in the teacher. Instead, it is a careful strategy employed by the teachers. Code-switching should be allowed whenever necessary with some learners in specific situations (Memory et al., 2018; Alenez, 2010). The literature reviewed has indicated the various positive and facilitating functions of code-switching approved by both the teachers and learners such as explaining new vocabulary, relaxing the learners, explaining grammar, talking about class tasks and assessments and establishing contact with learners.

The study has different pedagogical implications. One is to look at code-switching as a resource to be used at all levels. This data from the study, also argues for the use of codeswitching among advanced teachers and students. Teachers should not think that because their students are highly proficient in English, so they should handle the classroom in English and abandon the use of L1 in the classroom. In the review of literature of this study the advantages and the disadvantages of L1 use in the classroom were discussed. The researcher mainly argue that L1 use in the classroom is more advantageous rather than detrimental and argue for bringing the L1 and codeswitching into the classroom.

INTERVIEWS WITH THE STUDENTS

After responding to the questionnaire, the researcher was keen to held semi-structured interviews with the participants with English proficiency levels to better understand and elicit information about their perspectives towards the use of code-switching in EFL classes. The interview questions were directed to twelve students (four students of each group). In short, all the twelve participants were interviewed at the end of the study in order to gather additional data and address issues not covered in the questionnaire. The researcher monitored how the students reacted to CS application, how they use CS in order to communicate with each other, and how they integrated CS during their EFL classroom.

Attitudes of students with various proficiency levels towards the use of code-switching in the ESL classroom

During the interviews with the students, it can be concluded that students with various proficiency levels have discrepant views on their attitudes towards the use of code-switching in the EFL classroom. When asked in the interviews, "How do you see code-switching in the EFL classroom", low and mid proficient interviewees have positive attitudes towards code-switching in the EFL classroom because it helps them to understand more on the topic; it helps them to understand difficult words. They further indicated that it helps them to follow instructions based on certain class activities and homework. The mid and low students also agreed that they switch codes between Arabic and English while speaking due to discussing exams and lectures, lack of equivalents in Arabic, better understanding and showing off. Moreover, interviews' results indicated that code-switching help students to catch the information easily and rapidly.

On the contrary, during the interviews with high proficient interviewees, it is noted that they have unfavorable attitudes towards the adoption of code-switching in the EFL classroom. Students with higher English proficiency felt that such code-switching behavior can be off-putting as it does not help in improving their linguistic competence in English. They consider it as a sign of unproficiency in English.

The reasons behind their code-switching

However, in order to understand the reasons behind students' switches, they were interviewed and asked, 'why did you code-switch to the English language'? The responses of mid and low proficient students have included various reasons for code-switching. One of the reasons is that the inability to maintain their speech in

English was mainly due to their English Language incompetence. Another reason is that they feel embarrassed among peers when they are stuck in speaking English, especially in making self-presentation. A third reason is that they do not know the appropriate word in English. It is even a psychological comfort for them sometimes. This is confirmed by Tabaeifard (2014) who states that the use of L1 reduces students' language anxiety and eventually uplifts the affective environment for the study.

On the other hand, the high proficient students have their own different reasons for using code-switching in creating a good relationship with their teachers and peers. Although the high proficient students prefer to use English only, but sometimes they preferred a combination of both Arabic and English while communicating with other students or classmates. It shows that student always give preference to Arabic while communicating with their classmates.

Whenever there was a mistake/error in the speech of one of the students and the teacher did not correct it, the students helped each other by telling him the right form using code switching.

The high proficient students are compelled to code-switch timeously to help peers keep abreast of the subject matter presented. One high proficient participant had this to say:

I use code-switching when my classmates have insufficient knowledge of English, and this reduces their comprehension of complex lexical concepts. In order to solve the situation, I am compelled to utilize code-switching to help clarify some challenging vocabulary problem.

The perceptions of low, mid and high achievers towards the factors of code-switching in EFL classroom

In order to find out the factors behind the use of code-switching among students with various proficiency in their EFL classroom, interviews were carried out with all 12 students (Four of each group

When asking about the factors leading to their code-switching in their English classes, low and mid proficient interviewees report that their poor ability in English, was one of the pedagogical factors that led to uses' code-switching. They thus assumed that if instruction completely delivered in English, this would cause problem for their

understanding. They believed that without Arabic use, they would not understand the lesson or what they were asked to do. They add that code-switching to mother tongue is needed in EFL classes because it helps them understand the target language to better understand what is being discussed. Code-switching helps them to attract students' attraction and strengthen understanding. This finding was also consistent with what the researcher observed in their classes to some extent.   Students' lack of motivation (their negative attitudes) was another factor that led to uses of code-switching. By "negative attitudes", the researcher meant that in the English classroom, many students were reluctant to learn English. Furthermore, it seemed that many students did not listen or pay attention to them when they taught in mainly English.

The inability to communicate or use English outside of university or after finishing university was another factor among the interviewed students with low proficiency. Having an environment to practice English appeared to be another concern for students because the only place for them to practice English was their classrooms during English lessons, and they were not given the opportunity to do this (mainly giving short answers, typically single-word ones, to their teachers).

Low and mid proficient interviewees also agreed with the application of code-switching in teaching and learning new vocabularies. They also believed that the use of code-switching in teaching increases their motivation, learning, and concentration. They also see that code-switching helps them understand the lesson as well as expressing themselves comfortably especially when they don't know what words to use in English. One of the low proficient interviewees rejects the use of English entirely, "*It's annoying, you'd better not speak English*".

On the other hand, high proficient interviewees say that it isn't beneficial for oral English practice if they communicate in English and it isn't also good for creating an environment for English learning. Besides, they believed that the use of Arabic would not be helpful when they were learning new vocabularies.

Regarding using code-switching in talking to their peers, one of the low proficient interviewees says that he likes to switch to the first language to communicate with each other and share learning experiences. He adds, *"I am more tolerable for others speaking in English with code switching".*

The factors for switching to their first language are like that: "when we come across some difficult points in English, Arabic can help us understand and let us think more clearly; it will help us communicate. The factors for the high proficient students who took negative positions are like that: it might be better to use more English; it would be better to use more standard English; not professional. Those mid proficient students who took the neutral position think that it depends whether or not to code switch.

Do you think your proficiency in English is related to the code switching in the EFL classroom?

Most participants of the three groups think that their foreign language proficiency is related or very related to the code switching in the EFL classroom.

The perceptions of low, mid and high achievers towards the functions of code-switching in EFL

Due to their proficiency levels, the interviewees have various views to code-switching based on its functions. Code-switching for mid and low students in EFL classroom functions as tool of translation. low and mid proficient interviewees also find it hard to talk in whole English command, so they resort to use Arabic. This is stated as follows:

Well maybe when I use some words or maybe when I try to explain something and no one of the class doesn't really understand, I will switch to Arabic just for that sentence but if it's for the purpose of the learning, the purpose of telling someone my idea, my opinion I will try to speak in English.

For me if they use fully in English it's okay but I need explanation in Arabic if it is new terms for me or it is new theory so difficult to understand in English. I need to codeswitch to Arabic language to explain so I can catch the meaning.

Based on the above excerpt, mid and low proficient students employed code-switching in the case of translating difficult words to their friends. In certain way, they wanted to make their friends understood the words by explaining it in Arabic but tried to stick on English whenever they conveyed their opinion. Nurhamidah et al., (2018) state that the student will use code-switching to fit others' language proficiency. The alternation of language was important as students acknowledge the level of English mastery of their teacher or other students. Students also felt that the use of translating language from English to Arabic was to avoid misunderstanding emerged from imprecise explanation of terms as shown below:

Because sometimes when I'm nervous when I do the presentation and I don't want them to wait for my ideas to come out I switch my language to Arabic and then I'm afraid they misunderstood what I mean because what I present is what I want to express. I don't want them to be misunderstood. (L.S.2)

From the excerpt, student was afraid that his idea would bring misunderstanding among peers so direct change from English to Arabic was very subtle optional to do. The obstacle students had encountered during teaching and learning process was they forgot the words the wanted to utter. In the middle of presentation, they chose to use Arabic because they were still lack of vocabulary. L.S. 2 and L.S. 3 state this as follows:

Well I do switch but I also do that kind of thing. I mean when I don't remember that words, I try to express it other sentences. (L.S. 2)

Because when I forgot the vocabulary or I feel if I speak in English will make my friends confused something like…hard to say in English yah I do code-switching. (L.S. 3)

From those two excerpts, mid and low proficient interviewees showed their intention to choose code-switching over because they forgot English vocabulary to express their ideas or they did not know other expression to express the lexical item (Sert, 2005). This is understandable for them use in classroom as long as their teacher allowed them to do so as stated by M.S. 1 and L.S. 3 below:

It is okay for me as long it is not in a situation that I should take their score. So I will differentiate between two different concepts here. If it is a formal concept they should speak in English for example during discussion that I need to look at not only whether they understand or not but also their articulation. But in other situation, once it finishes and I change into more relaxing discussion and then after that it is okay for them to speak Arabic. (L.S. 1)

Actually when I do presentation it is like I will see the lecturer first, is it okay to me to speak in Arabic so I will use Indonesia but if I see the lecturer is very strict yeah something like that I will use English when the presentation happen. (L.S. 3)

The researcher thought that it is understandable and allowable for students to do code-switching in classroom when it is in discussion mode where teacher should not have to take score from their ideas. Students might encounter difficulty to express their idea because limited vocabulary size.

Based on the interview, students with low proficiency would respond in Arabic when teacher spoke in other language other than English. This situation was where students had no choice but to use Arabic. This is quite similar to the Tabaeifard (2014)'s proposal about teacher-induced code-switching. This event occurs when students do code-switch after teacher's code-switching whereas the case students considered the situation in which they were allowed to use L1 or not.

This is also applied when students talk to their peers, they tended to choose Arabic rather than English as shown in the following excerpt:

It's no problem to me because for example I speak with my friends in classroom I use Arabic and no problem with this even my lecturer heard about that just see two of us and there is no punishment that he or she gives to use that we speak Arabic in classroom but only in informal conversation. But in presentation we must use English. (H.P.S. 3)

The excerpt shows that student with high proficiency would do code-switching in respond to his friend. Tabaeifard (2014) further explains that students tend to choose L1 over L2 to communicate with others. This is also as part of the same identity or background.

Perceptions of high, mid and low students toward teacher code-switching

Based on the interviews with the participants, it seems clear that low and mid proficient interviewees have favorable attitudes toward teacher code-switching.

They favored the instructors' code-switching behavior due to their concern in comprehending the lectures. Code-switching was favored due to its necessity to aid comprehension. This group of students felt that their low English Language proficiency hindered comprehension. Although most of the students agreed that the use of Arabic helped them to comprehend the lectures better, they also admitted that the use of English was also necessary to expose them to their subjects of studies.

On the other hand, the more proficient group held quite unfavorable attitude towards the instructors' code-switching. They felt that the use of code-switching should be minimized

as students should be more exposed to the English Language since most references are available in that language. Thus, switching from English to Arabic to solve comprehension problems did not seem to be a long-term solution for less proficient students. Comprehension problems might occur during self-study. This proficient group also claimed that any input received in English can prepare them not only for self-study, but also for their future career. It is very interesting to note that these students claimed that the instructors' language of instruction can help them develop their English Language competence to enable them cope in their field of study.

The results of the interview also show that the students with less proficiency prefer their teacher to use both English and Arabic in the same capacity. Alenezi (2010: 7) said that the students more desirable and believe that code switching of the teacher makes the course easy to understand. They would get difficulties to catch the meaning of the speech if the instructor used English a lot. Meanwhile the students with higher proficiency prefer their teacher to use more English. The findings are similar to the results of Tabaeifard (2014) who reported that the students with less English proficiency were more tolerant to the instructors' code switching compared to the more proficient group. The students with higher proficiency might believe that the use of English by the teacher could improve their language competence specifically in vocabulary. AL-Nofaie (2010) also found that it can help the students to understand new vocabulary. The results also show that the students with higher proficiency were sometimes confused about the use of code switching by their lecturer that did not add their vocabulary. They believed that for adding vocabulary, it depends on their desire and their effort by reading English books, watching movie and listening the music. They further argued that the use of code switching should be minimized. The argument was also founded in Rahimi and Jafari 's article (2011) that it should be minimized because it is bad for the EFL students. It assumed that if the teacher often used that, it can make the bad behavior to the next generation and will be more difficult to avoid.

However, interviews with the students reveal that their teacher's language choice and use were largely determined by their own competence in English and their students. This had led to their behavior in the classroom instruction. The less proficient instructors normally use both Arabic and English in their lectures. However, they would maintain the referential items in English as these were the key words that students needed to know for the concepts learned. On the other hand, the more proficient instructors either gave explanation in English first and then translated it into Arabic when required, or straight away mixed both languages in their explanation.

The interview results also showed that the lower proficient students were not confident to speak English to the teacher who was using code switching. They tended to use Arabic because they were afraid of making mistakes or troubles to their speaking if they use English. They thought that they had poor vocabulary and poor understanding of grammar. But if the teacher spoke in English, they would try speaking English too, then use Arabic to the words which they did not know the meaning. Unlike the lower proficient students, the higher proficient students were still confident to speak in English to the teacher who was using code switching even though in a simple sentence. However,

sometimes, they tended to use Arabic or code switching because they did not want to be seen showing off their English competence.

The impacts of code-switching on learning and teaching of English

Due to the differences in proficiency levels, the participants in the study have contrastive views regarding the impacts of code-switching on learning and teaching of English. While some students see code-switching as an asset to teach and learn language, the other group see it as merely an obstacle to achieve learning goal that is to acquire target language. For example, low and mid proficient interviewees see code-switching as a very effective tool because it helps learners to understand what is being taught. It improves their vocabularies and grammar, their listening skills, and it helps them to understand difficult materials, and it makes them more confident in learning English.

On the other hand, high proficient interviewees see that code-switching has a negative influence on their learning of English. For instance, one of the interviews says, *"when the teacher codeswitches to Arabic, my classmates tend to make noise and they do not pay attention to the teacher, but when he starts teaching in English they pay attention"*.

From his view, this is a sign that in their class they do not like codeswitching at all. Moreover, another interview with high proficient students mentioned that he is not in favor of code-switching. He comments; "*both learners and teachers should use English only. This is how others will learn English better"*. A third one said, "*it is not good in a context where your classmates don't understand the mother tongue, this results in them being left out"*.

In responding to the question, " do you think code-switching is beneficial or harmful to learning and teaching English?", low and mid proficient interviewees see code-switching is beneficial to learn English, while high proficient students see that code-switching is harmful to learning and teaching English because it weakens their mastery of the language

OBSERVATION

When observing the three groups in the grammar, linguistics, translation and reading classes, the researcher noted that the low and mid proficient students like to code-switch for translation, explanation of grammar, assessing understanding, asking and answering question, indicating sympathy and friendship to students, putting stress on important notions, shifting topics, and for getting students' attention (Sert, 2005). It was also observed that the students switched from the target language to their native language while expressing their feelings of pleasure and displeasure. they code switch in the more informal situations where a student asks another student for help. They understood more when their teacher spoke Arabic. They like to code switches When they got their results on a test, and they wanted to discuss their results in Arabic or in a combination of both English and Arabic.

On the other hand, it has been observed that high proficient students prefer to use English in all the courses being taught. In attending some classes, it has been observed that the students want their teacher to deliver all the subject materials in English only. This makes

the students enthusiastic, and they pay more attention to the lesson. They resort to use code-switching in limited situations when they do not have the accurate word or proper expression; they try to find the equivalent lexical item in the target language, or to fill in the gap in the conversation. Sometimes, students find it challenging to put the words in proper syntactic order. They also like to do code-switching while doing activities such as answering reading comprehension questions, doing grammar exercises and other exercises in their text books. At such times, moving to the first language seems the only resort in order to get the message across. At many occasions, code switching occurs for purely learning and teaching purposes.

Besides, some high proficient students also use code-switching to show affiliation to a certain group and to show off the linguistic background. For instance, some learners code switch to prove their belonging to a certain nationality or to follow the modern language trend in their community. They also switch code as a symbol of status and prestige.

DISCUSSION

The responses from the interview and observations regarding students' attitudes towards the use of code-switching are compatible with the findings of the questionnaire. The results of the study revealed that there is a relationship between students' English proficiency level and their' use of L1 (i.e. Arabic) in their EFL classes. It was found that the students with low proficiency level used L1 more than the other high-level students. This indicates that there is an impact of English language proficiency level on code switching. The higher the EFL learners' proficiency level is, the lesser code switching occurs, and vice versa.

According to the results of the questionnaire, interview and observation sheet, investigating the high proficient students' attitudes toward the use of teachers' code-switching shows that the majority of the students' attitudes are negative. These findings correspond to some others (Liang, 2006; Dweik, 2000; Rahimi & Jafari, 2011) For example, Rahimi and Jafari (2011) found that majority of students believed that teachers should not code-switch, even though they it facilitated their interactions. Dweik (2000) reported that the students hold negative viewpoints towards the teacher who code-switched. The reason for having negative attitude is ascribed to the fact that the students expected their teachers to speak English. Thus, if they code-switch, their language competence could be doubted. Dykhanova (2015) provided arguments for this option. He found that the students hold negative viewpoints towards the teacher who code-switched, as they believed their teacher to be incompetent in English. Moreover, they could break the university language regulation.

The high proficient students believed that teaching courses only in English is beneficial to them. They also did not believe that using code-switching made materials easy to understand or strength students' English level of proficiency. On the contrary, they thought that using code-switching led to the weakness of the students' English proficiency level. Moreover, they seemed feel more comfortable using only English when communicating with their students.

Moreover, the high proficient students who opposed any future use of code-switching argued that such strategy would not help students to improve their proficiency. They also believed that English class has to be English Only. This goes in line with what Hakim (2019) and Masrahi (2016) explain regarding giving students the exposure to English. Using and exposing students to English in the class are essential since English classroom tends to be the main source of English exposure. Their disapproval of future code-switching can be taken as a signal that they have developed sufficient level of proficiency that resulted in their rejection.

On the other hand, the results of the present study indicate that many low and mid-proficiency level EFL learners use code-switching more than high proficient students due to their poor proficiency in English of the students which in turn is likely to affect their ability to communicate effectively with their teachers and their peers (Hakim, 2019; Carson, 2014; Al-Hourani & Afizah, 2013; Ariffin & Husin, 2011). The low and mid-proficiency level EFL learners consider code-switching as a favorable tool for learning and teaching English. They hold positive attitude towards it as they agree that it facilitates learning and provides a better understanding of the lesson content. This view is in line with a study conducted by Carson (2014) who considered code-switching as a favorable tool if language learners are failed to accommodate with the barriers of the target language".

Besides, the results indicated that these learners with mid and low proficiency approved the teachers' code-switching because it facilitates learning and understanding, particularly when they lack lexical or syntactical knowledge. These findings are supported by many other studies (Alenezi, 2010; Sardar, 2015; Weng, 2012). For instance, Weng (2012) and Istifci (2019) reported that the majority of students with low proficiency agreed they feel comfortable with the teacher's code-switching, because they feel difficult to understand words, concepts and terms of L2. Similarly, Ahmad and Jusoff (2009) revealed that the majority of the student code-switching made them feel more comfortable and confident and helped to learn English.

Based on the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that at lower levels of proficiency students like to use CO more than intermediate or advanced levels of proficiency participants. Shariati (2019) investigates the issue of lower levels of proficiency students and he offers allowing them to produce ideas in L1 and then assist them to realize the linguistic structures that will change their ideas into the L2. Shariati (2019) suggests that by doing this, lower levels of proficiency learners may be able to reach more ideas as otherwise they are confused by the dilemma between linguistic information and opinions on the issue. As the current research shows that lower level learners tend to use L1 more than higher level students, Shariati (2019) is in line with the current research.

At the same time, using English in the class entirely is seen less tangible since low proficient students in EFL teaching learning context tend to have difficulties in understanding full English instruction (Alenezi, 2010). Switching between languages can be a solution for this problem, and EFL teachers have to deal with low English proficiency of students due to the limited context. This result corroborates the findings of Mahdi and

Almalki (2019), Shanehsazzadeh and Darani (2017), Sardar (2015), Carson (2014); Svendsen (2014), and Ahmad and Jusoff (2009) that code-switching might be a helpful strategy to use in low proficient classrooms as well as the intermediate level classrooms (AL-Nofaie, 2010; Bailey, 2011) and it could increase their motivation and interaction in the class discussions. The study findings are also in consistent with the study conducted by Oktavia1 and Trisnawati (2019) who report that students who have lower ability in English were assumed to have more positive attitudes to code switching than the students who have better ability in English. In other words, there is an 'inverse correlation' between the use of code switching and student competence. when the class level is low, code switching is higher, and when the class level is high, less code switching is used. Consequently, the students' proficiency would in the end affect the teaching and learning of English language.

CONCLUSION

The present study attempts to investigate the perceptions of Saudi EFL students with various proficiency levels towards the adoption of code-switching in the context of higher education. Sixty-four students participated in the study. The participants were classified into three groups (i.e. High- proficiency, mid- proficiency and Low-proficiency) according to the scores obtained in the Oxford Placement Test. Three tools (Questionnaire, semi-structured interview and observation sheet) were used to achieve the objective of the study. Data from the questionnaire were analyzed in terms of simple frequency counts and percentage. These were complemented by data from the interviews and observation sheets. The findings of the research indicate that there is some discrepancy among Saudi students with various proficiency levels on uses of code-switching in EFL classes. Mid and low proficient learners at Qassim university have positive attitudes towards uses of code-switching in in EFL classes. They code switch due to many reasons such as lack of understanding and vocabulary knowledge and unproficiency in the target language. They consider code-switching as a valuable tool for facilitating teaching and learning English. On the other hand, the findings also show that the high proficient students have unfavorable perceptions to the use of code-switching in EFL classes. They argued that such strategy would not help students to improve their proficiency. They see that the use of code-switching has undesirable impacts on their proficiency in the target language. They suggest that teachers should reduce the use of code-switching as possible as they can.

The findings of the present study were compatible with that reached by Masrahi (2016) and Bailey (2011) who state that students who perceived that their competence in the foreign language was high had less favorable perceptions of teachers and students' code-switching and also had less favorable attitudes toward code-switching by both groups than did students who perceived their competence in the language as low. In addition, the high perceived language competence group was also less likely to engage in code-switching and did so less frequently.

The findings of the present study provide teachers and teaching practitioners with some insights into the use of L1 in an EFL classroom. English language learners learn best when

their needs are met (Rabab'ah and Al-Yasin, 2016). Code switching can be considered a useful strategy in classroom interaction. Most importantly, Arabic language (L1) should be used in Saudi EFL low level classes in order to provide them with comprehensible input, which will ultimately lead to language acquisition. Teachers should switch to transfer the necessary knowledge to the students for better understanding. Since the use of L1 is to build solidarity and intimate relations with students, and to joke with students, code switching can be viewed as the creation of a supportive language environment in the classroom. However, one should bear in mind that teachers' use of L1 should be minimal to ensure that L2 learning is given due attention and focus. Code-switching would be permitted in situations where students perceive that their competence in the language is low.

Lack of English Language competence on the parts of students has been claimed as the major motivating factor for the code-switching occurrence. This certainly has a significant implication on their English Language development skills. Most importantly, the findings have served as a basis for any language training needs for the instructors to enable them to teach effectively using English as the medium of instruction. As implied by the students' response, the language of teaching can affect the process of learning and acquiring knowledge. Thus, there seems to be an important need for the instructors to pay more attention to the language used in delivering the content of their lectures to benefit learning.

However, an instructor is suggested to be careful in applying codeswitching strategies and functions. Excessive use of the students' code-switching may hinder the learning process in that it reduces the excellent chance of EFL learners' exposure to the Foreign language that has been adjusted to their learning pace. On the other hand, strictly prohibiting the learners from using their mother tongue increases the chance of high anxiety of the learners, especially when they are adults and they are more sensitive in using a somewhat unknown language.

As a result, EFL teachers are urged to exercise moderation in using the students' L1 in the classroom because, as stated before, the students' mother tongue is a powerful tool at a teacher's hand that can facilitate the process of foreign language learning, if applied wisely and moderately. Therefore, teachers are advised to rise their awareness of the functions of codeswitching that they can apply wherever they feel that the adoption of foreign language is hindering its learning.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCHES

Based on the findings, the recommendations given are (1) further research on code-switching in various contexts be conducted, (2) further research on code-switching practiced by speakers with different habit of using English be conducted, and (3) teachers contemplate the necessity of using code-switching in their classroom.

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